NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

FISHPOND MANAGEMENT

(Ac.)

CODE 399

DEFINITION

Managing impounded water for the production of fish or other aquatic organisms (non-commercial use).

PURPOSE

- To provide favorable habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms.
- To develop and maintain a desired species composition and ratio.
- To develop and maintain a desired level of production.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

In warm and cold water ponds, lakes, and reservoirs where fish or other aquatic organisms are desired for non-commercial use.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes

Structures will meet or exceed the requirements of the appropriate National Standard; i.e. a constructed pond will meet or exceed the requirement in Pond (378).

A buffer or filterstrip that meets the Filterstrip (393) practice standard will be established and maintained around the pool area.

All federal, state and local regulations will be followed and necessary permits obtained prior to stocking, etc.

To minimize potential problems with species that are considered invasive or may become invasive, species selection(s) and stocking rates shall follow Nebraska Biology Technical Note No. 64, Fish Pond Stocking, developed with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission http://my.nrcs.usda.gov/portal/technology/treemenuFS.aspx?StateName=Nebraska&MenuName=menuNE.zip&MenuType=2.

Species for stocking will be limited to those that are adapted for use in ponds, lakes, or reservoirs in the local area.

Stocking rates and species selection and combinations shall be based upon the size, depth, water temperature, and water quality of the waterbody to be stocked.

Additional Criteria To Provide Favorable Habitat For Fish And Other Aquatic Organisms

The site will be protected from sedimentation and contamination.

Excessive aquatic vegetation shall be controlled.

Additional Criteria To Develop And Maintain A Desired Species Composition And Ratio

To maintain the desired species composition and species balance a plan will be developed with the client to monitor changes in species composition and size distribution through observations, seining, and catch records.

CONSIDERATIONS

Consider the use of native species.

Consider liming acidic soils in the watershed to achieve a neutral pH for best production.

Consider the effects of fertilization or supplemental feeding on organism size and growth rates as well as on water quality and organism health.

Consider alternatives to the use of pesticides in the drainage area above the site, which may have negative impacts to water quality.

Consider the use of filter strips or other practices in the drainage area to maximize the quality of surface and ground water entering the water body. Consider methods to prevent the desired species from escaping the pond, lake, or reservoir into adjoining waters.

Consider protection of the water body from excessive flooding.

Consider methods to prevent introduction of stocked species into adjoining waters where native species might be adversely affected or to prevent non-compatible species from entering the pond, lake, or reservoir.

Consider providing additional fish and wildlife habitat within or around the impoundment for cover and breeding purposes, if it will not compromise the integrity of the structure or the purpose of this practice.

Consider limiting livestock access to the pond area through the use of alternative watering facilities and fencing.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for fish and other aquatic organism management will be in keeping with this standard and will describe the requirements for applying this practice to achieve its intended purpose. Specifications for this practice will be prepared for each site. Specifications will be recorded using approved specifications sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other documentation.

Requirements for the operation and maintenance of this practice shall be incorporated into site specifications.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The client will receive a plan or specifications describing the following management and corrective actions, if required, for the successful management of the pond, lake, or reservoir.

- Managing fish or other aquatic organism populations.
- Supplemental feeding.
- Removing undesirable and overpopulated fish and/or organisms.
- Aquatic plant control.
- Fertilizing.
- Supplemental fish stocking.

REFERENCES

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nebraska Biology Technical Note No. 11 – Private Fish Pond Stocking Assistance from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, 2000.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nebraska Biology Technical Note No. 64 – Fish Pond Stocking, 2000.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wildlife Habitat Management Institute – Fish & Wildlife Habitat Management Leaflets. http://www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov/whmi/technotes.htm

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, University of Nebraska, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and fish and wildlife organizations can provide additional references/publications on fishpond management